Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has released grant-in-aid of Rs. 5.82 lakhs during 1998-99 to Guild of Service, a voluntary organization working for women in need and implementing a project for the rehabilitation of widows of Vrindavan by providing them shelter, food, means of living, vocational training etc. Another grant of Rs. 14.04 lakhs has been sanctioned during the current financial year (1999-2000), 50% of which amounting to Rs. 7.02 lakhs has been released in October, 1999.

(d) No, Sir.

Central Assistance to Orphanages

2537. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the number of orphanages receiving financial assistance from the Government in the Country at present, State-wise;

(b) the criteria fixed for giving financial assistance to them; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to ensure proper utilization of the amount allocated for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) The Government of India is not having any scheme to give financial assistance to orphanages.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Assistance to Craftsmen through NBCFDC in U. P.

†2538. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government extend assistance to the States for the benefit of craftsmen through National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation; and

(b) if so, the amount received by Uttar Pradesh under this head during the last three years and the target fixed for the next year, alongwith the number of people to be benefitted thereby during the said period?

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†Original Notice of the question was recived in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) and (b) The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation provides financial assistance to the eligible members of Backward Classes through State Channelising Agencies nominated by the concerned State Governments. In Uttar Pradesh, the Uttar Pradesh Pichhara Varg Vitta Avam Vikas Nigam Ltd. has been nominated as the State Channelising Agency. Details of amount received by Uttar Pradesh Pichhara Varg Vitta Avam Vikas Nigam Ltd. from NBCFDC during last three years for income generating activities are as under :—

Year	Amount (Rs. in lakhs)	No. of Benef.
1997-98	141.58	425
1998-99	1360.38	4123
1999-2000	230.00	460

For the current year, the NBCFDC has notionally allocated Rs. 22 Crore for benefiting about 6000 beneficiaries to Uttar Pradesh Pichhara Varg Vitta Avam Vikas Nigam Ltd.

National Trust for Welfare of Mentally Handicapped

2539. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the status of the National Trust which was established for the welfare of mentally handicapped people:

(b) whether it is a fact that Government are scouting for famous names to constitute the Board;

(c) whether Government will give any importance to involve activists who have contributed in the field and towards policy evolvement;

(d) to what extent will Government depart from the usual route of nominating the conventionally known names and high profile people; and

(e) what steps will be taken to impart a sincere and dynamic approach to the National Trust formed recently ?